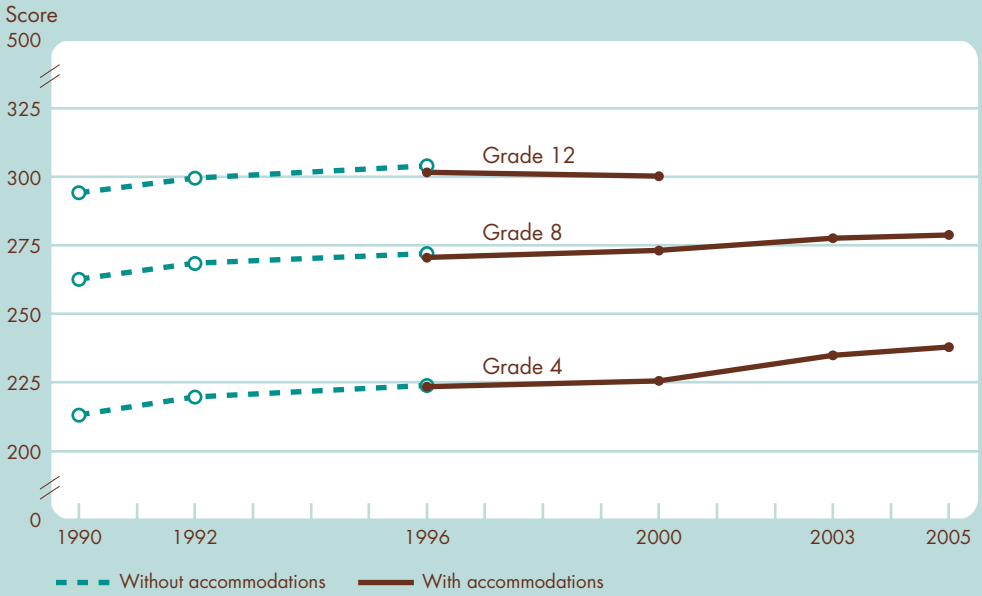
Education Indicators

Education shapes the personal growth and life chances of children, as well as the economic and social progress of our Nation. Early educational experiences of young children, such as being read to daily, encourage the development of essential skills and prepare children for success in school.[17] Later aspects of academic performance, such as mastering mathematics, reading, and other core subjects, as well as completing high school, open opportunities for higher education and future employment.

In 2005, 60 percent of children ages 3–5 were read to daily by a family member, an increase from 53 percent in 1993, when the data were first collected. White, non-Hispanic and Asian children were more likely than their Hispanic and Black, non-Hispanic peers to be read to daily in 2005.[18] Children living in families below their poverty thresholds were less likely to be read to daily than their peers in non-poor households (both those at 100–199 percent of their poverty threshold and those at 200 percent of their poverty threshold or above).

Fifty-seven percent of children ages 3–5 who were not yet in kindergarten were enrolled in center-based early childhood care and education programs in 2005. This percentage was higher than in 1991 (53 percent), but lower than the percentage in 1999 (60 percent). In 2005, Hispanic children were the least likely to be enrolled in center-based programs; 43 percent of Hispanic children were enrolled, compared with 70 percent of Asian children, 67 percent of Black, non-Hispanic children, and 59 percent of White, non-Hispanic children.[18]

Figure 9 **Average mathematics scores for students in grades 4, 8, and 12, selected years 1990–2005**



NOTE: Data are available for 1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2003, and 2005. The 2003 assessment only included grades 4 and 8. The 2005 assessment included a 12th-grade component, but these data were not available in time to be included in this report. In early years of the assessment, testing accommodations (e.g., extended time, small group testing) for children with disabilities and limited-English-proficient students were not permitted. In 1996, scores are shown for both the assessments with and without accommodations to show comparability across the assessments.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

[17] Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., and Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

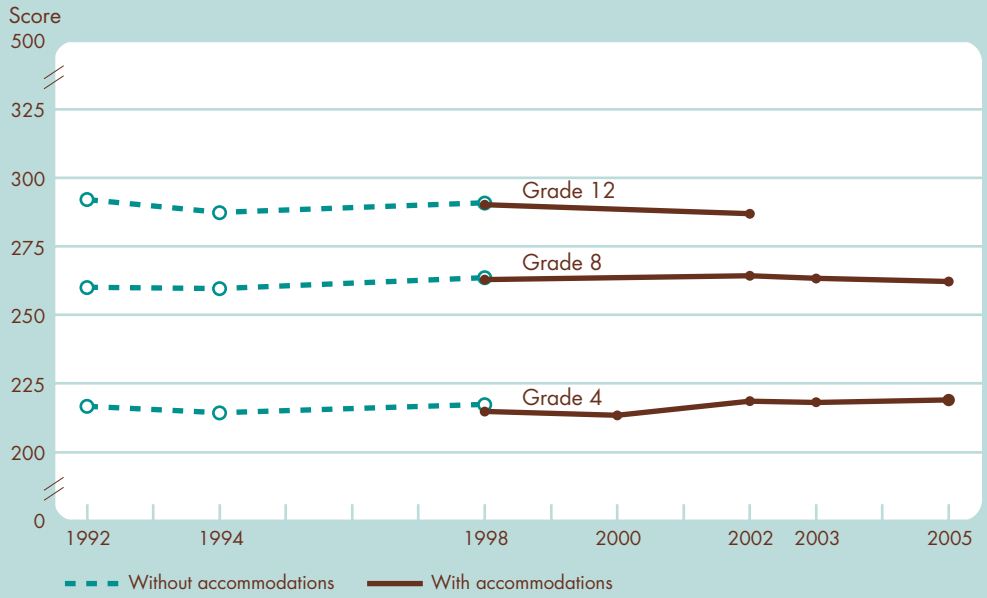
[18] In this survey, respondents were asked to choose one or more races. All race groups discussed in this paragraph refer to people who indicated only one racial identity. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Hispanic children may be of any race.

The average mathematics and reading scores of 4th- and 8th-graders on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments represent what students know and can do in these subjects. In mathematics, 4th- and 8th-grade scores were higher in 2005 than in all previous assessments since the series began in 1990 (Figure 9).

The average mathematics score of 4th-graders increased from 213 in 1990 to 235 in 2003, and to 238 in 2005 (on a scale of 0–500). The average mathematics score of 8th-graders increased from 263 in 1990 to 278 in 2003, and to 279 in 2005. White, non-Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic students had higher average scores than their Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; and Hispanic peers in 2005.[19]

Fourth-graders had an average reading score of 217 in 1992, which increased to 219 in 2005 (on a scale of 0–500) (Figure 10). Among 8th-graders, the average reading score increased from 260 to 263 between 1992 and 2003 before decreasing to 262 in 2005. White, non-Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic students outperformed their Black, non-Hispanic; American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; and Hispanic peers in both grades.[19]

Figure 10 **Average reading scores for students in grades 4, 8, and 12, selected years 1992–2005**



NOTE: Data are available for 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2005. The 2000 assessment only included grade 4, and the 2003 assessment only included grades 4 and 8. The 2005 assessment included a 12th-grade component, but these data were not available in time to be included in this report. In early years of the assessment, testing accommodations (e.g., extended time, small group testing) for children with disabilities and limited-English-proficient students were not permitted. In 1998, scores are shown for both the assessments with and without accommodations to show comparability across the assessments.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

The percentage of young adults ages 18–24 who had completed high school with a diploma or an alternative credential such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate was 87 percent in 2004, an increase from the 1980s, but a fairly stable percentage since the early 1990s. A higher percentage of Asian young adults had completed high school in 2004 (95 percent), compared with their White, non-Hispanic (92 percent); Black, non-Hispanic (83 percent); and Hispanic (70 percent) peers.[18]

[19] In this survey, respondents were asked to choose one of the following races: White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Hispanic children may be of any race.